



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

July 6, 2000

H.R. 3919
Coral Reef Conservation and Restoration Partnership Act of 2000

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on June 20, 2000

SUMMARY

H.R. 3919 would provide for a coordinated national strategy to protect and conserve coral reefs. For this purpose, the bill would:

- Establish a permanent Coral Reef Task Force, composed of the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior (co-chairs), the heads of several other federal agencies, and the governors of states designated by the co-chairs. The task force would coordinate federal programs, national policies, research, and other activities related to coral reefs. The group would have six months to publish a strategy to protect coral reefs. It also would develop a plan for mapping, monitoring, and assessing U.S. coral reefs.
- Create a grant program for conservation projects carried out by state or local agencies, educational institutes, or nonprofit organizations.
- Authorize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to carry out conservation activities such as mapping and monitoring, developing public awareness and education programs, and providing assistance to states in implementing conservation measures and removing abandoned vessels and other debris from reefs.
- Codify a requirement in a 1998 executive order (pertaining to coral reef protection) that federal agencies whose actions may affect a reef ecosystem must, to the maximum extent practicable, ensure that its activities will not degrade the condition of the reef.

The bill would authorize the appropriation of \$16 million for each of fiscal years 2001 through 2004 to carry out these purposes. Of this amount, \$0.5 million annually would be earmarked for each of the two agencies co-chairing the task force and \$1 million annually

would be used to establish the Coral Disease Center in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The balance would fund conservation, research, and enforcement measures taken by NOAA or its grantees.

H.R. 3919 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The bill contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA).

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 3919 would cost the federal government \$64 million through fiscal year 2005. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment). The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 3919 is shown in the following table.

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Coral Reef Protection Spending Under Current Law						
Budget Authority ^a	6	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays	5	1	0	0	0	0
Proposed Changes						
Authorization Level	0	16	16	16	16	0
Estimated Outlays	0	8	15	15	16	10
Coral Reef Spending Under H.R. 3919						
Authorization Level ^a	6	16	16	16	16	0
Estimated Outlays	5	9	15	15	16	10

a. The 2000 level is the amount appropriated for that year.

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

The bill would provide statutory authority for the activities of the coral reef protection task force, and other activities such as coral reef mapping and monitoring, and conservation grants—all of which are currently being carried out under Executive Order 13089

(June 11, 1998). For these activities, NOAA received an appropriation of \$6 million for fiscal year 2000.

For this estimate, CBO assumes that H.R. 3919 will be enacted during fiscal year 2000 and that the entire amounts authorized will be appropriated for each year. Outlays are based on historical spending patterns for similar NOAA programs.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS: None.

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

H.R. 3919 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA. The bill could benefit state and local governments that receive federal assistance to implement coral reef conservation measures or that choose to apply for a federal matching grant for coral reef projects. Any costs incurred would be voluntary on the part of state or local governments.

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The bill contains no new private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

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